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051243Z Mar 01

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PAGE 01 HARARE 00903 01 OF 03 051245Z
ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOT-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	IRM-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	R-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8343
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000903

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER
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SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI BRIEFS HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL IRVING. REASONS: 1.5
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PAGE 02 HARARE 00903 01 OF 03 051245Z
(B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

1. (U) IN HIS FIRST-EVER BRIEFING FOR THE HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI SAID ZIMBABWE IS IN A STATE OF "TERMINAL PARALYSIS" DUE TO THE BREAKDOWN IN THE RULE OF LAW AND INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. TSVANGIRAI URGED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ENGAGE CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH THE MUGABE GOVERNMENT IN PRESSING IT TO REVERSE COURSE, NOT IMPOSE SANCTIONS, WHICH WOULD HURT ONLY ORDINARY ZIMBABWEANS. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE MDC PRESIDENT WAS CAREFUL TO NOTE HIS PARTY DID NOT CONSIDER CONGRESS'S ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY BILL TO BE SANCTIONS LEGISLATION, BUT RATHER AN INCENTIVE TO GOOD GOZ BEHAVIOR. TSVANGIRAI EMPHASIZED THE MDC'S COMMITMENT TO EQUITABLE,

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LAWFUL LAND REFORM THAT IS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES IDENTIFIED BY THE 1998 DONORS' CONFERENCE ON LAND. TSVANGIRAI THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE WOULD

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CALL AN EARLY ELECTION, BUT MASS ACTION WOULD BE APPROPRIATE ONLY IF MUGABE STEALS THE ELECTION OR FINDS AN EXCUSE NOT TO HOLD IT. THE MDC IS MORE COHESIVE THAN IT WAS LAST JUNE AND IS REGAINING SOME POLITICAL MOMENTUM. THE OPPOSITION PARTY IS FOCUSING BOTH ON WINNING THE ELECTION AND ON DEVISING THE POLICIES IT WOULD IMPLEMENT IF IT WINS. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI BRIEFED HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ON
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PAGE 03 HARARE 00903 01 OF 03 051245Z
MARCH 2 ON THE OPPOSITION PARTY'S POSITION ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SEKAI HOLLAND, THE PARTY'S SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. CHARGE AND POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF WERE IN ATTENDANCE. TSVANGIRAI SPOKE FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES, THEN TOOK QUESTIONS.

3. (U) TSVANGIRAI EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT ZIMBABWE IS IN A STATE OF "TERMINAL PARALYSIS," DUE TO SEVERAL CRITICAL FACTORS. FIRST WAS THE "ALARMING" BREAKDOWN IN THE RULE OF LAW, EVIDENCED BY THE EMASCULATION OF THE POLICE AND WAR VETERANS WREAKING HAVOC WITH ABSOLUTE IMPUNITY. THE ESCALATING ATTACKS ON THE JUDICIARY ARE PARTICULARLY DISTURBING, AS THE EXECUTION OF JUSTICE IS COMPROMISED IF NOT EVEN JUDGES ARE SAFE.

4. (U) THE SECOND CRITICAL FACTOR WAS THE INCREASE IN

GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. ELEMENTS OF THE ARMY, FOR INSTANCE, HAVE BEEN SENT INTO TOWNSHIPS TO BEAT PEOPLE INDISCRIMINATELY, WITHOUT CAUSE OR PROVOCATION. THE MDC LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO BE HARASSED, SUBJECTED BOTH TO "FLIMSY" CHARGES UNDER AN UNCONSTITUTIONAL LAW (NB: THE LAW AND ORDER MAINTENANCE ACT) ENACTED BY IAN SMITH TO WIELD AGAINST AFRICAN NATIONALISTS, AND PHYSICAL INTIMIDATION, EVIDENCED BY THE RECENT BEATINGS OF TWO MDC MPS. THE GOZ IS TRYING TO MUZZLE THE INDEPENDENT PRESS, INDICATED BY THE BOMBING OF THE DAILY NEWS PRINTING PRESS, THE RELUCTANCE TO ISSUE OPERATING LICENSES TO PRIVATE RADIO BROADCASTERS, AND THE ILLEGAL DEPORTATION OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS. THE MDC'S 37 ELECTORAL CHALLENGES WERE PROCEEDING IN THE HIGH COURT - - THREE HAVE BEEN HEARD SO FAR -- AND WERE SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT ON THE SERIOUS ABUSES WHICH HAD OCCURRED DURING

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PAGE 04 HARARE 00903 01 OF 03 051245Z
LAST JUNE'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. A COURT DECISION TO SET ASIDE THE RESULTS IN SOME OF THE CONSTITUENCIES, TSVANGIRAI OBSERVED, WOULD CHANGE THE EQUATION IN

SIPDIS
PARLIAMENT. THE BOTTOM LINE OF THE BREAKDOWN IN THE RULE OF LAW AND TERRIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IS THAT ZIMBABWEANS HAVE LOST CONFIDENCE IN THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT'S CAPACITY TO RUN THE COUNTRY'S AFFAIRS. THE THIRD CRITICAL FACTOR WAS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ECONOMY, WHICH TSVANGIRAI PREDICTED COULD NOT LAST ANOTHER FIVE MONTHS UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

15. (U) THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE, TSVANGIRAI SAID, NOW HAS TWO OPTIONS. IT COULD CONTINUE ON ITS CURRENT REPRESSIVE PATH, WHICH WOULD LEAD INEVITABLY TO ITS OWN DOWNFALL, OR IT COULD REVERSE COURSE. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS A CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN CONVINCING THE MUGABE GOVERNMENT TO DO THE RIGHT THING. THE MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH FOR OTHER NATIONS IS CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT, NOT THE IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS, A STEP WHICH THE MDC DOES NOT ADVOCATE. TSVANGIRAI NOTED RECENT PRESS REPORTS THAT THE ZIMBABWE

SIPDIS
DEMOCRACY ACT (ZDA) MIGHT BE REVIVED SOON BY THE U.S. CONGRESS. THE MDC, HE SAID, DOES NOT CONSIDER THE ZDA A SANCTIONS BILL BUT AN "INCENTIVE" TO PERSUADE THE GOZ TO REVERSE ITS DAMAGING POLICIES. CONGRESSIONAL PASSAGE OF

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ1712

PAGE 01 HARARE 00903 02 OF 03 051246Z
ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
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P 051243Z MAR 01
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 000903

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THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION, HE THOUGHT, WOULD HELP "KNOCK
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PAGE 02 HARARE 00903 02 OF 03 051246Z
SOME SENSE" INTO THE GOVERNMENT.

16. (U) TSVANGIRAI REJECTED CRITICISM THAT THE MDC DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY ON LAND. HE INSISTED THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTY IS COMMITTED TO EQUITABLE, LAWFUL LAND REFORM THAT WILL GUARANTEE FOOD SECURITY AND PROTECT THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC BASE. THE MDC OBJECTS TO THE METHODOLOGY OF THE FAST TRACK RESETTLEMENT PLAN, WHICH HE CALLED "RUINOUS." THE PARTY CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN THAT ANY LAND REFORM POLICY

MUST BE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES ENDORSED AT THE 1998 DONORS
CONFERENCE.

Q'S AND A'S

17. (U) IN RESPONSE TO A NUMBER OF VARIED QUESTIONS FROM
THE ASSEMBLED DIPLOMATS, TSVANGIRAI MADE THE FOLLOWING
POINTS:

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

18. (U) TSVANGIRAI THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE
WILL CALL AN EARLY ELECTION. HE THOUGHT THE STATE OF THE
ECONOMY -- AND ITS PROGNOSIS FOR RECOVERY -- WOULD BE AN
IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR THE PRESIDENT IN MAKING THIS
CALL. ASKED WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAD CHARGED HIM RECENTLY
WITH INCITING VIOLENCE, THE MDC PRESIDENT SAID THE GOZ
ACTION CONSTITUTED "PURE HARASSMENT," AND THAT IT HAD BEEN
HOLDING THE POTENTIAL CHARGE OVER HIS HEAD FOR ALMOST SIX
MONTHS. IF CONVICTED, HE WOULD BE SENTENCED TO A MINIMUM
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HARARE 00903 02 OF 03 051246Z
OF SEVEN YEARS IN PRISON AND WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO RUN FOR
PRESIDENT. HE WOULD APPEAL A CONVICTION TO THE SUPREME
COURT, BUT FELT CONFIDENT THAT THE HIGH COURT WOULD DISMISS
THE CHARGE, AS SECTIONS OF THE LAW AND ORDER MAINTENANCE
ACT PREVIOUSLY HAVE BEEN DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL. THE
LOMA, HE POINTED OUT, IS BEING APPLIED SELECTIVELY, AS
PRESIDENT MUGABE AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS IN HIS
GOVERNMENT HAVE MADE MUCH MORE "TREASONABLE" STATEMENTS.
SEKAI HOLLAND INTERJECTED THAT THE ARREST OR CONVICTION OF
TSVANGIRAI COULD BE THE SPARK THAT SENDS ANGRY ZIMBABWEANS

SIPDIS
INTO THE STREETS IN PROTEST, AND THE GOVERNMENT WAS WELL
AWARE OF THAT POSSIBILITY.

19. (U) ACCORDING TO TSVANGIRAI, THE MDC HAS POSTPONED MASS
ACTION, AS NOW IS NOT THE "RIGHT TIME." THAT ASSESSMENT
MIGHT CHANGE, HOWEVER, IF THE GOVERNMENT STEALS THE
ELECTION OR AVOIDS HOLDING ONE BY DECLARING A STATE OF
EMERGENCY.

NEW CONSTITUTION?

110. (U) TSVANGIRAI EXPRESSED HIS SUPPORT FOR A NEW
CONSTITUTION, BUT THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO
ACCOMPLISH IN THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT. HE COMPARED THE
DILEMMA TO THE CHICKEN AND EGG CONUNDRUM, ASKING
RHETORICALLY WHETHER IT MADE MORE SENSE TO PUT A NEW BULB
IN A DEFECTIVE LAMP, OR TO REPLACE THE LAMP. HE THOUGHT
THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED WAS FIRST TO REPLACE THE CURRENT
GOVERNMENT WITH ONE WILLING TO ALLOW A CONSTRUCTIVE
CONSTITUTION-DRAFTING PROCESS TO MOVE FORWARD.
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PAGE 04 HARARE 00903 02 OF 03 051246Z

RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA

111. (U) TSVANGIRAI'S RECENT MEETINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH
ANC OFFICIALS REPRESENTED A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE OF ATTITUDE
FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. THE DISCUSSIONS HAD
PRODUCED A COMMON UNDERSTANDING THAT THE ANC-MDC DIALOGUE
SHOULD BE CONTINUED AT ALL LEVELS. "IT IS NOT TRUE THAT
PRESIDENT MBEKI CONDONES WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ZIMBABWE," HE
STATED.

SANCTIONS

112. (U) ASKED TO CLARIFY HIS STATED OPPOSITION TO THE
IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS AGAINST THE GOZ, TSVANGIRAI
PROVIDED TWO REASONS. SANCTIONS WOULD HURT ORDINARY
ZIMBABWEANS, NOT THE MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT AT WHOM THEY
WOULD BE TARGETED, AND THEY WOULD TAKE A LONG TIME TO
REVERSE, EVEN AFTER AN MDC GOVERNMENT CAME INTO POWER.

MDC THEN AND NOW

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CONFIDENTIAL PTQ1713

PAGE 01 HARARE 00903 03 OF 03 051246Z
ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOT-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00

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P 051243Z MAR 01
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[13.](#) (U) TSVANGIRAI WAS ASKED TO ASSESS HOW THE MDC HAS
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PAGE 02 HARARE 00903 03 OF 03 051246Z
EVOLVED SINCE THE JUNE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. HE SAID IT
WAS NATURAL THAT THE MDC WOULD FACE SOME INTERNAL PROBLEMS,
GIVEN THE BROAD-BASED NATURE OF THE PARTY MEMBERSHIP.
HOWEVER, HE BELIEVED THE PARTY WAS NOW MORE COHESIVE AND
WAS BEGINNING TO REGAIN MOMENTUM AS IT PREPARED FOR THE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THE MDC'S PRIMARY FOCUS IS WINNING
THE ELECTION, BUT THE PARTY IS ALSO PUTTING IN PLACE ITS
PLAN FOR GOVERNING. THE MDC'S PRIORITIES UPON TAKING
OFFICE WOULD BE RESTORING THE RULE OF LAW, REVITALIZING THE
ECONOMY, PUTTING THE LAND QUESTION BACK ON A "SANER PATH,"
AND REENGAGING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

COMMENT

[14.](#) (C) TSVANGIRAI APPEARED CONFIDENT AND RELAXED, AND HE
HANDLED WITH EASE AND HUMOR THE MANY DIFFICULT QUESTIONS
ASKED OF HIM. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THE MDC PRESIDENT
HAS BRIEFED A GATHERING OF HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS,
BUT HE INTENDS THE MARCH 2 SESSION TO BE THE FIRST
INSTALLMENT IN A REGULAR SERIES OF SUCH GATHERINGS.
TSVANGIRAI SEEMS TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT IT IS IN THE MDC'S

SIPDIS
INTEREST TO STEP UP ENGAGEMENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY AS MUGABE'S GOVERNMENT BECOMES
INCREASINGLY ISOLATED. HE ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE RECOGNIZED
THAT, AS THE ZIMBABWEAN FIGURE MOST LIKELY TO WIN A FREE
AND FAIR ELECTION, HE SHOULD WEIGH IN WITH THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON THE IMPORTANT ISSUES OF THE DAY.
TSVANGIRAI'S REACHING OUT TO THE HEADS OF MISSION IS A

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POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT THAT SUGGESTS HE IS MATURING AS A
POLITICIAN.

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PAGE 03 HARARE 00903 03 OF 03 051246Z

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